



**Embassy of the United States of America**  
*Athens, Greece*

*Aug 2013*

**LIST OF ATTORNEYS FOR GREECE**

The following attorneys enjoy a good reputation and speak English. The Embassy cannot assume responsibility for their professional ability or integrity. If you have any complaints or concerns regarding any of the attorneys on this list, please contact us immediately. The attorneys are listed alphabetically, by town, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. All are Greek citizens, since under Greek law no alien may practice law in Greece. Please see the next page for additional advice on hiring a lawyer in Greece.

Attorneys in Northern Greece start in page 11 and refer to the Prefectures of: Thessaloniki, Halkidiki, Kozani, Grevena, Florina, Pieria, Emathia, Pella, Kilikis, Serres, Kavala, Larisa, Trikala, Karditsa. It also includes Mount Athos, and the islands of Thassos and Samothrace.

This list, which is updated triennially, includes lawyers who handle criminal and civil (inheritance, divorce, etc.) cases; a separate list of lawyers specializing in business law is available from the Embassy's Commercial Section.

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- **When making your choice, please take into consideration whether you can easily communicate with the attorney and whether he/she appears responsive. The Embassy does not have the staff to handle or facilitate communications between you and your attorney. If your attorney does not speak English and you don't speak Greek, please arrange for a translator; you may be able to find one through a Greek Orthodox Church or the Greek Department of a local college or university.**
- **Please make sure you and your attorney are in clear agreement on the services that will be provided for the fee you pay. The best way to ensure this is to have a written fee agreement. It is wise to keep records and receipts of all payments.**
- **Please understand that the Greek legal system differs substantially from the American system. The basic principles are the same, however, and the Embassy is aware of no case in recent years in which Americans were discriminated against because of their nationality. In our experience, Your problem will be handled more effectively if you work with your attorney in the framework of the Greek system, rather than if you expect that things will be settled "our way".**
- **Be prepared for a lengthy process: Greek courts are very backlogged, and postponements and delays are very common. Especially in estate and property cases, a hearing may wait months (if not a year or longer); even criminal cases may take up to 18 months to come to trial. If there are special circumstances, your attorney can petition the court for an early trial or hearing date, but such requests are not always granted. The decision of the initial court is often appealed in Greece; in a civil case, however, an appeal cannot be filed until the initial decision is formally recorded by the court, a process that may take additional months. The Embassy has no standing to intervene these processes.**

**Regarding telephone numbers, always start with 011. Then:**

**To dial from the US to Athens: 30 210 and the number.**

**To dial from the US to an area outside of Athens: 30 plus the area code, which appears in parentheses, and the number.**

Thank you

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**ATHENS/PIRAEUS (Tel. area code 210)**

**AGGELOPOULOS – PAPADIMITRIOU**

**Law Firm**

**Partner Aggelopoulos, Dimitrios**

Athens University Degree, 1967,  
University of Paris, 1972.

**Partner Papadimitriou, Christos**

Athens University Law Degree, 1970.  
Practicing attorney since 1977. One  
associate attorney, Tzavras, Stelios  
Firm Specializes in: civil, commercial,  
corporate, inheritance, real estate,  
family, criminal law.

Papadimitriou specializes in criminal,  
family and inheritance law

Office address: Ippokratous 52-54, 106  
80 Athens

Tel. No.:

Aggelopoulos (210) 3605-368

Fax: (210) 3626-283

e-mail:

Mobile:

Aggelopoulos 6937048060

Papadimitriou

6944474217

**ANAGNOSTOPOULOS Law Firm**

Athens University Law Degree 1978.

Specializes in: criminal, corruption &  
anti-competitive

Practices, anti-terrorism, money  
laundering & compliance

Office address: Patriarhou Ioakim 6,  
GR-106 74 Athens

Tel. # office : (210) 7292-010/12

Fax: (210) 7292-015

e-mail: [contact@iag.gr](mailto:contact@iag.gr) or

[ianagnostopoulos@iag.gr](mailto:ianagnostopoulos@iag.gr)

website: [www.iag.gr](http://www.iag.gr)

**ANDREOULAKOS, SPAKOURIS**

**Law Firm**

Law firm headed by George  
Andreoulakos. Athens University  
Law Degree, 1993. Degree in Magister  
Juris  
Comparativus, Bonn Law School.

Specializes in: penal and civil law

Office address: Patission 113

GR-112 51 Athens

Tel # office: (210) 8219-616, (210) 8253-  
900

Fax: (210) 8253-926

Mobile: 6944435389

e-mail:

[gaandreoulakos@yahoo.co  
m](mailto:gaandreoulakos@yahoo.com)

**ANDRIAKOPOULOU, MARIA LOUIZA**

National&Kapodestrian Uni Law degree,  
Uni of Strathclyde post-graduate  
diploma in counseling, accredited  
mediator from the Center of Effective  
Dispute Resolution UK

Specializes in: civil, family,

marriage/divorce, criminal, estate, tax,  
auto, transportation, adoptions.

Office address: 23, Harilaou Trikoupi,  
Athens 10681

Tel office: 210-3808932

Fax: [angelopoulos210-3808932@iag.gr](mailto:angelopoulos210-3808932@iag.gr)

e-mail: [mandriakopoulou@yahoo.com](mailto:mandriakopoulou@yahoo.com)

**ARKOULI, CATHERINE**

University of Lille, France. Degree  
1998.

Specializes in: civil, family, Int'l private  
law

real estate, inheritance, land  
law

Office address: Apolonos 5, GR-105  
57 Athens

Tel /fax# office: 210-3240-244

Mobile: 6974377135

e-mail: [aarkouli@hol.gr](mailto:aarkouli@hol.gr)

**BALASSIS & Associates Law Office:**

Athens National and Kapodistrian Uni.  
1993, Democritus Uni. Of Thess 1998,  
University of London, King's College  
2003.

Specializes in: Family law, Child  
custody/Abduction law, Civil law,  
Estates, Transportation, taxes,  
Auto/Accidents, Commercial,  
Immigration, Corporation, Foreign  
Investments and claims.

Office address: 56, Patriarchou Ioakeim St. 10676

Athens

Tel. # office: (210) 7215425,

Fax: (210) 3609-108

e-mail: balassis@athens-lawyers.gr

Website: www.athens-lawyers.gr

**DESSYLAS, ANASTASIOS C.**

Athens University Law Degree, 1980

Seventeen associate attorneys.

Specializes in: civil, commercial,  
banking, inheritance

Office address: Akadimias 43, GR-106  
72 Athens

Tel. # office: (210) 3627-376 / Fax:  
(210) 3640-035

Tel. # home: (210) 6985-019 / Fax:  
(210) 6912-695

Mobile:

6936937770

Email:

desant@gr

**ECONOMIDES, ARISTIDES**

Athens University Law Degree, 1958.

Professor in University of Paris.

Specializes in: criminal law

Office address: Herodotou 4, GR-106  
75 Athens

Tel. # office: (210) 7245-295/7

Fax: (210) 7238-326

Mobile:

6944356561

e-mail:

**ECONOMOU, PANAGIOTIS**

Athens University.

Specializes in: civil, estate, family, tax,  
criminal law

Office address: Asklipiou 26, GR-106  
79 Athens

Tel # office: (210) 3603-824

Fax: (210) 3639-973

e-mail:

website:

econlaw.gr

**ELEFThERIADOU, LOUISA MARIA**

Born in Canton, Ohio, USA, in 1971.

Practicing attorney since 1997.

Demokritio University of Thrace, Law

School. Case Western Reserve

University, Cleveland, Ohio, Master of

Laws in US Legal studies, graduation in  
honors.

Specializes in: Wills and Estates,  
Property Law, Taxation, Family Law,  
Powers of Attorney, Commercial and  
Corporate, Administrative, Trademarks  
Correspondence: Greek, English,  
German

Office address: Kritis 3, Kifissia, 14563  
Athens

Tel. and Fax: (210) 6207274

Mobile: 6974-311641

E-Mail:

leleftheriades@hotmail.com

lmelawfirm@hotmail.com

**GALEADIS, NATALIA**

Pantheon-Sorbonne

University, Paris. Degree, 1996. Three partners  
and

three associate attorneys.

Specializes in: criminal, banking & securities, tax  
law

Office address: Valaoritou 9A, GR-106 71 Athens

Tel. # office: (210) 3612-309 & (210) 3606-  
669

Fax: (210) 3637-144

e-mail: [info@gkqlaw.gr](mailto:info@gkqlaw.gr) /

[ngaleadi@gkqlaw.gr](mailto:ngaleadi@gkqlaw.gr) [infoath@economidesco.gr](mailto:infoath@economidesco.gr)

**GAVALAS, ANDREAS**

Thessaloniki University

Law Degree, 1990. Supreme Court since 2000.  
Five

associate attorneys.

Specializes in: criminal, civil, family, real estate  
law

Office address: I. Filimonos 2 & Gelonos, GR-115  
21 Athens

Tel. # office: (210) 6470-575, (210) 6468-198

Fax: (210) 6454-767

Mobile: 6977-673337

e-mail: andreasgavalas@yahoo.gr

**GIANNAKOPOULOU, EUGENIA**

Boston University School of Law Degree 2006, **HAUGHTON, ANNA M.** New England School of Law, Member of the MA Bar & US Federal Bar  
Specializes in: civil, child custody, inheritance estates, real estate, immigration, family law, taxes, contracts

Office address: Ag. Fotinis 14, GR-171 21 N. Smyrni

Tel & Fax # office: (210) 9351-450

e-mail:

website: [www.jg-greeklaw.gr](http://www.jg-greeklaw.gr)

**GKLEGKLE, HELEN**

Athens University Law Degree, 1994

Specializes in: family law, victims assistance, Property, custody, divorce, criminal

Office address: Massalias 10, GR-106 80 Athens

Tel # office: (210) 6434-628, (210) 3602-9680

Fax #: (210) 3607-863

Mobile: 6977001249

e-mail:

**GOUZANIS, VASSILIOS G.** Athens University Law Degree, 1998.

Specializes in: criminal, civil law

Office address: Panepistimiou 57 (Rm 204B) GR-105 64 Athens

Tel, Fax: (211) 0194920

Mobile: 6944441694

e-mail: gousanis@mail.com

**GRIGORIOU, STYLIANOS H.**

Athens University Law Degree, 1984; Athens Economic School, 1990;

London School of Economics (LLM), 1986.

Member

Of the EALG (EuroAmerican Lawyer's Group)

Specializes in: criminal, civil, family, adoptions, child

custody, parental abduction, immigration, estates, insurance, banking, taxes

Office address: Leof. Alexandras 6, GR-106 82 Athens

Tel # office: (210) 8221-411

Fax: (210) 8820-691

Mobile: 6949115439

e-mail:

web: [www.gregorioulaw.gr](http://www.gregorioulaw.gr) ;  
[www.gregorioulaw.com](http://www.gregorioulaw.com)

personal injury law

Office address: Chiliandariou 3, GR-113 63 Athens

Tel/fax # office: (210) 6464-435 [info@jg-greeklaw.gr](mailto:info@jg-greeklaw.gr)

Mobile: 6934270994

e-mail:

[annahaught@aol.com](mailto:annahaught@aol.com)

website: [www.greeklandlaw.com](http://www.greeklandlaw.com)

**KARAGEORGIOU, STAVROS J. & Associates**

Athens University LL.B, 1985, New York

University, LL.M, 1986, University of London

LL.D, 1990.

Specializes in: civil law, constructions & real estate,

litigation

[glegle@massalias.gr](mailto:glegle@massalias.gr)

Office address: Akadimias 34, GR-106 72 Athens

Tel. # office: (210) 7221-021

Fax: (210) 7213-981

E-mail: stkar@otenet.gr

Web: [www.karageorgioulaw.gr](http://www.karageorgioulaw.gr)

**KAZAS, GEORGE**

Athens University Law Degree 2005

Boston University School of Law, LLM in 2008

Specializes in: family, adoptions, child custody , parental abduction, civil, criminal, estates, auto accidents, immigration.

Familiar with US law

Office address: Mystra 3, GR-114 75 Athens

Tel # office: (210) 6468-780

Mobile: 6948520140

E-mail: kazasgeorge@gmail.com

**KARAPIDAKIS, KONSTANTINOS**

Athens University Degree, 1994; LLM Law School, NY 2002.

Specializes in: civil, inheritance, commercial law

Office address: Eolou 104, GR-105 64 Athens

[info@gregorioulaw.gr](mailto:info@gregorioulaw.gr)

Tel. No: (210) 3237-420

Fax No: (210) 3239-98

Mobile: 6972-835751  
e-mail: [kkaralaw@otenet.gr](mailto:kkaralaw@otenet.gr)  
web: [www.karapidakislaw.gr](http://www.karapidakislaw.gr)

### **KOURTIS, STEVEN**

Catholic University of America, Law Degree, 1991. Licensed to practice in PA

Specializes in: civil, inheritance, real estate, family,

ex-pats, criminal

Office address: Mitropoleos 38, GR-115 28 Athens

Tel # office: (210) 3218-900, ext. 206

Fax: (210) 3218-933

Mobile: 6932193374

e-mail: [grsnklaw@aol.gr](mailto:grsnklaw@aol.gr)  
[skourtis@fdmalaw.com](mailto:skourtis@fdmalaw.com)

website: [www.fdmalaw.com](http://www.fdmalaw.com)

### **LAINIOTI, ARSINOI**

University of Minnesota Law Degree, 1990. One associate attorney, Ms. Sakellariou, Ioanna. Also has law office in the U.S.

Lainioti specializes in: real estate, company, commercial, tax and inheritance law.

Sakellariou specializes in criminal law

Office address: Vryoulon 1, GR-151 21 Pefki

Mobile: 6937028630

e-mail: [info@lainioti-lawoffices.com](mailto:info@lainioti-lawoffices.com)

website: [www.lainioti-lawoffices.com](http://www.lainioti-lawoffices.com)

### **LYKOUREZOS, ALEXANDROS Law Firm.**

Law Firm headed by Alexandros Lykourezos.

Athens University Law Degree, 1957.

Specializes in: criminal law, family law, banking law, copyright & Int'l arbitration.

Office address: Dimokritou 19, GR-106 73 Athens (LLM).

Tel. # office: (210) 3607-913/4, (210) 3638-03

Tel # home: (210) 7229-553

Fax: (210) 3607-983

Mobile: 6972805000

e-mail: [allykourezos@lykourezos.gr](mailto:allykourezos@lykourezos.gr)

### **MANOLIS, ANGIE**

Thrace University Law Degree, 2001

Specializes in: civil, private International arbitration

law, criminal law

Office address: Har. Trikoupi 161-163 & Laskareos 48

GR-114 72 Athens

Tel. # office: (210) 6432-010

Fax: (210) 6432-071

Mobile: 6937464545

e-mail: [ajmanolis@hotmail.com](mailto:ajmanolis@hotmail.com)

### **MYLONOPOULOS, CHRISTOS**

Athens University Law

Degree, 1977; post graduate at the University of Saabruecken, Germany

Specializes in: criminal, Int'l & EU criminal law,

Extradition law, financial

criminal,

EU arrest warrants

Office address: Valaoritou 9, GR-106 71 Athens

Tel # office: (210) 3611-337

e-mail: [chrmyl1@otenet.gr](mailto:chrmyl1@otenet.gr)

### **NIKEA-MOURATOGLOU, TITIKA**

Athens University Law Degree, 1979.

Three associate attorneys.

Specializes in: civil, criminal, real estate & inheritance

Office address: Fidiou 14-16, GR-106 78 Athens

Tel. # office: (210) 3843-494

Fax: (210) 3839-819

e-mail: [tnikea@otenet.gr](mailto:tnikea@otenet.gr)

Mobile: 6977633924

### **PANTAZIS, STEFANOS**

Athens University Law Degree, 1979; Masters

from Uni

of Freiburg (LLM) 1983, Masters from Uni of Thessaloniki

(LLM).

Specializes in: civil, criminal, commercial, corporate,

transportation, family & inheritance

Office address: 71-73 Alexandras Avenue 11474

Tel. # office: (210) 36-33-694



Fax: (210) 64-56-394  
e-mail: main@pantazis-law.com  
Webpage: www.pantazis-law.com

**PAPADOPOULOS, JOHN G.** Athens

University

Law Degree, 1960.

Specializes in: criminal and civil law

Office address: Themistokleous 43-45,  
GR-106 83 Athens

Tel. # office: (210) 3821-667

Fax: (210) 3815-532

Mobile:

6944610635

e-mail:

Papadopoulos.i.g@dsa.gr

**PAPAZISSIS, MICHAEL**

Thessaloniki University Law Degree.

Specializes in: civil, criminal,  
commercial

Office address: Xanthou 5, GR-106 73  
Athens

Tel. # office: (210) 3640-143 / 3616-  
063

Fax: (210) 3646-590

e-mail:

[mpapgr@otenet.gr](mailto:mpapgr@otenet.gr)

**PEPONAS Law Firm**

Athens University Law Degree, 1990.

Specializes in: criminal, civil, property,  
inheritance

Taxation, immigration law

Specializes in: civil, criminal, sports and  
law of  
succession

Office address: Kifissias Ave. 73, 11523

Tel # office: (210) 3301-950

Fax: (210) 3301-920

Mobile:

694608019

Email: [mpeponas@mac.com](mailto:mpeponas@mac.com)

**RODOPOULOS, ALEXIS** Athens

University Law Degree, 1995.

Specializes in: civil, criminal,  
commercial law and contracts

Office address: Amerikis 15, GR-106 72  
Athens

Tel. # office: (210) 3637-478 / 3637-  
746

Mobile:

6945541825

Email:

aron80@otenet.gr

**SALAGIANNIS, DIMITRIOS**

University of South Bank, London;

University of Westminster, London LLM,  
2000

Specializes in: civil, criminal,  
commercial, shipping law

Office address: Voukourestiou 21, GR-  
106 71 Athens

Tel/Fax # office: (210) 3614-000

Mobile:

6984196000

e-mail:

**SARAKIS, PAVLOS K Law Firm**

Athens University Law Degree, 1992.

Postgraduate studies at the University of  
Rome.

Specializes in: criminal, civil, banking,  
administrative, inheritance, European  
and int'l law, immigration, torts, property,  
sports law and agreements

Office address: Patission 20-22, GR-106  
77 Athens

& Kanigos 7, GR-106 77

Athens

Tel. Nos: 210-3841-400/ 3827-  
900/3838-789

Fax: 210-3306-937

Mobile:

6932420640

E-mail: [sarakis@sarakis.gr](mailto:sarakis@sarakis.gr)

**SPYRIDAKIS-TSOUKALA, Law firm**

**Tsoukala Eleni** University College

London (UCL), Master's Degree 2000

Specializes in: Family law, adoptions,  
child abduction

civil, immigration, estates,

auto

accidents, tax law,

banking /financial

law

Office address: Solonos 7, GR-106 71  
Athens  
Tel # office: (210) 3614-340  
Fax # office: (210) 3614-343  
Mobile: 6977258676  
e-mail:  
[eleni.tsoukala@stlawfirm.gr](mailto:eleni.tsoukala@stlawfirm.gr)  
website: [www.stlawfirm.gr](http://www.stlawfirm.gr)

**STAROYIANIS, STRATIS**

Athens University Law Degree, 1962.  
Specializes in: General practice, civil &  
criminal  
Office address: Stadiou 61, GR-105 51  
Athens  
Tel. # office: (210) 324-9184  
Tel. # home: (210) 813-3066  
Fax: (210) 324-7773  
Mobile:  
6944383649

**TSAGARAKI IRENE:**

Ph.d. in Criminal Law, Ludwig-  
Maximilians Uni. Of Munich, Ph.d. in  
Criminal Law Uni of Zurich, LL.M. in  
German Law, Bachelor degree in Law  
National & Kapodistrian Uni of Athens.  
Specializes in: Family law, adoptions,  
child custody-protection-abduction,  
estate, taxes, auto/accidents.  
Office address: Lambrou Katsoni 24,  
11471, Athens  
Tel. # office: (210) 924-1481  
Fax: (210) 324-7773  
E-mail: [itsagaraki@gmail.com](mailto:itsagaraki@gmail.com)

**TSELIOS, HARALABOS:**

Athens law faculty, graduated in 1989, post  
graduate studies in civil law. Qualified to practice  
law in all levels of the judicial system including the  
Supreme Court.

Office address: Evrou 4 St. Athens  
11528  
Tel # office: (210) 3622583  
Mobile: 6973773850  
e-mail:  
[Tselios@gmail.com](mailto:Tselios@gmail.com)

**VAKRINOS and associates Law Office**

Thessaloniki University Law Degree, 1978.

Specializes in: civil, custody cases, international  
private  
law, taxation, real estate

**Athens office:** Kefalinias 18, GR-113 61 Athens  
Tel. # (210) 8235-819/210 8218-  
892  
Mobile: 6979061234  
Fax: (210) 8235-819  
E-mail: [tvakrinos@gmail.com](mailto:tvakrinos@gmail.com)

**U.S.A. offices:**

3908 Eagle Lake Court  
Arlington, Texas 76016  
Tel. # (817) 572-6667  
Fax: (817) 478-6667  
Email: [tvakrinos@gmail.com](mailto:tvakrinos@gmail.com)

7822 Ridgecrest Drive  
Alexandria, VA 22308  
Tel. # (703) 768-6666  
Fax: (703) 768-5657  
Email: [tvakrinos@gmail.com](mailto:tvakrinos@gmail.com)

**AMALIADA (Tel. Area Code 26220)**

**BIRBILIS, EMMANUEL**

Athens University Law Degree in  
1996.  
Specializes in: civil, inheritance,  
criminal law  
Office address: El. Venizelou 14  
GR-272 00 Amaliada  
Tel. # office: (26220) 38160  
Fax: (26220) 38161

**CYCLADES (Single Court System)**

**MYKONOS (Tel. Area Code 22890)**

**DEMOU, ALEXANDRA**

Athens University Law Degree, 1972.  
Specializes in: criminal law, general  
practice  
Office address: Vastao-Mylos Pentara  
GR-846 00 Mykonos  
Tel. # office: (22890) 23725, Fax: (22890)  
27664  
Tel. # home: (22890) 22481  
Mobile: 6944410340

E-mail: dimou.aleka@gmail.com

Mobile #: 6972058508

**NAXOS (Tel. Area Code 22850)**

E-mail: [cdokimos@yahoo.com](mailto:cdokimos@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.dokimakis.com](http://www.dokimakis.com)

**HERUVIM, SOFIA D.**

Athens University Law Degree, 1982

Specializes in: civil, bank, inheritance

Office address: Chora, GR-843 900 Naxos

Tel # office: (22850) 22192

Fax: (22850) 25349

**ASSIMAKOPOULOS, ASSIMAKIS**

Thrace University Law Degree, 1999.

Specializes in: civil, inheritance, penal law

Office address: Hora, GR-843 00 Naxos

Tel # office: (22850) 22518

Fax: (22850) 25152

Mobile: 6936994434

e-mail: naxoslaw@yahoo.gr

**PAROS (Tel. Area Code 22840)**

**THEOHARIDES, TASSOS A.** Athens

University Law Degree, 1981.

Specializes in: real estate, civil law

Office address: Paroikia, GR-844 00

Paros,

Tel # office: (22840) 23800

Fax: (22840) 21393

E-mail:

**SYROS (Tel. Area Code 22810)**

**DEKAVALLA, HARIKLIA**

Thessaloniki University Law Decree, 1993

Specializes in: civil, criminal, family and administrative, inheritance law

Office address: G. Stavrou 1, Ermoupolis, GR-841 00 Syros

Tel # office: (22810) 85529

Fax: (22810) 84529

Mobile: 6932240919

e-mail: harulade@otenet.gr

**DOKIMAKIS, CONSTANTINOS**

Athens University Law Decree, 2003

Specializes in: general practice

Office address: Emm. Roidi 13, GR-841 00 Syros

Tel & Fax #: (22810) 89200/81000

**CRETE**

**HANIA (Tel. Area Code 28210)**

**FOUNTOULAKI, ANTONIA**

Athens University Law Degree, 1980.

Specializes in: criminal law

Office address: Sfakion 52, GR-731 34 Hania

Tel. # office: (28210) 72014

Fax: (28210) 91895

Mobile: 6973326673

e-mail: tonina\_f@otenet.gr

**KOTSIFAKIS, NICHOLAS**

Thessaloniki University Law Degree, 1976. LL.M Degree from Glasgow University in 1981.

Specializes in: general practice

Office address: Sfakianaki 36Γ, GR-731 34 Hania

Tel. # office: (28210) 42710

Fax: (28210) 28452

Mobile: 6977777954

e-mail: nkotsifakis@isc.duc.gr [info@thelaw.gr](mailto:info@thelaw.gr)

**STASSINOU, ELVI**

Komotini University Law Degree, 1997.

Specializes in: criminal, civil, property

Office address: Sfakion 60, GR-731 34 Hania

Tel/Fax # office: (28210) 59644

Mobile: 6937048306

E-mail: [elvistassinou@yahoo.com](mailto:elvistassinou@yahoo.com)

**HERAKLION (Tel. Area Code 2810)**

**MARKAKIS, PETROS**

Athens University Law Degree, 2000.

Specializes in: general practice including criminal law

Office address: Pappa Alexandrou 16, GR-712 02 Heraklion

Tel. # office: (2810) 226239

Tel. # home: (2810) 380480

Fax: (2112) 6868-90

Mobile: 6944790945

Email: [markakip@otenet.gr](mailto:markakip@otenet.gr),  
[petros@markud.com](mailto:petros@markud.com)

**PERTSINAKIS, GEORGE**

Athens University Law

Degree, 1973.

Specializes in: general practice, including criminal  
& civil law

Office address: Pappa Alexandrou 16, GR-712 02 Heraklion

Tel. # office: (2810) 224278; Fax: (2810) 227868

Tel. # home: (2810) 245957

Mobile: 6944868675

e-mail: [gpertsinakis@gmail.com](mailto:gpertsinakis@gmail.com)

**RETHYMNON (Tel. Area Code 28310)**

**PAPADOSIFOU, CHRISTIANA**

Athens University Law Degree, 1998.

Specializes in: civil, criminal,  
contracts, auto  
accidents

Office address: Demokratias 6, GR-741 00 Rethymno

Tel/Fax # No: (28310) 52420/50610

Mobile: 6974 875067

e-mail: [mictat@otenet.gr](mailto:mictat@otenet.gr)

**ZANNETOS, SAVVAS**

Athens University Law Degree, 1992.

Specializes in: criminal, civil, real  
estate, inheritance law

Office address: Igoumenou Gavriil  
103-105,

GR-74100 Rethymno

Tel # No.: (28310) 26258

Fax: (28310) 52263

Mobile: 6932134620

e-mail: [zannetos@otenet.gr](mailto:zannetos@otenet.gr)

**NEAPOLIS (Tel. Area Code 28410)**

**SKYVALAKIS, ELEFTHERIOS**

Athens University

Law Degree, 1972.

Specializes in: criminal, civil, inheritance  
law

Office address: Rousou Koundourou 1,  
GR-724 00 Neapolis

Tel. # office: (28410) 32001

Fax: (28410) 32412

**HIOS (Tel. Area Code 22710)**

**PSORAS, MICHAEL**

University of Thessaloniki Law.

Degrees, 1987 & 1991.

One associate attorney.

Specializes in: civil and criminal law

Office address: Alex. Pachnou 3,  
GR-821 00 Hios

Tel. # office: (22710) 21641 /  
42497(fax also)

Email: [psorasm@hol.gr](mailto:psorasm@hol.gr)

Mobile: 6932543319

**KARDITSA (Tel. Area Code 24410)**

**ANYFANTIS, GEORGE**

Athens University Law Degree, 1983. Practicing  
attorney since 1985.

Specializes in: civil, inheritance, criminal  
law

Office address: Kolokotroni 10  
GR-431 00 Karditsa

Tel # office: (24410) 25007

Fax: (24410) 22154

**KEFALONIA (Tel. Area Code 26710)**

**KAPPATOS, PANAGIS**

Athens University Law Degree, 1987.

Two associate attorneys.

Specializes in: general practice,  
maritime law

Office address: Minoos 4 &  
Lithostroto, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

GR-281 00 Argostoli

Tel. # office: (26710) 25508

Fax: (26710) 29158

Tel. # home: (26710) 23580  
Email: pkappato@otenet.gr

**ANOUSAKIS, NIKOLAOS**

Athens University Law Degree, 2000.

Specializes in: civil, inheritance,  
criminal

Office address: Leof. Vergotis 14  
& S. Antypa Str.

GR-281 00 Argostoli

Tel. & fax# office: (26710) 27044

Mobile: 6972373084

e-mail:

[nikosanousakis@yahoo.gr](mailto:nikosanousakis@yahoo.gr)

**KERKYRA (Tel. Area Code 26610)**

**GERAKARIS, SPYROS**

Athens University Law Degree, 1983;  
University of Paris Panthion –  
Sorbonne Law School – DEA program  
1983-1984

Specializes in: civil, criminal,  
commercial, corporate  
law

Office address: Ag. Panton 16,  
GR-491 00 Kerkyra

Tel# office: (26610) 33819,  
37222

Fax: (26610) 39613

e-mail: [ierakari@otenet.gr](mailto:ierakari@otenet.gr)

**TZIVANIDI-SAVANI, STAVROULA**

Komotini University Law Degree, 1994  
Four practicing attorneys.

Specializes in: civil, banking,  
land, debts, commercial,  
inheritance, criminal law

Office address: Mantzarou 6, GR-  
491 00 Kerkyra

Tel # office: (26610) 26258, 30334

Fax: (26610) 31407

Mobile: 6976635000

e-mail:

[stavrsav@otenet.gr](mailto:stavrsav@otenet.gr)

**KORINTHOS (Tel. Area Code 27410)**

**DEMAS, GEORGE**

Athens University Law Degree, 1952.

Specializes in: criminal and civil  
law

Office address: Koliatsou 49-51  
GR-201 00 Korinthos

Tel. # office: (27410) 24667 / 29075

Fax: (27410) 29901

Tel. # home: (27410) 23200

Mobile: 6932437755

e-mail:

[demaslaw@otenet.gr](mailto:demaslaw@otenet.gr)

**KOS (Tel. Area Code 22420)**

**KOSTOGLOU, MICHAEL**

Athens University Law Degree, 1983.

Specializes in: civil, criminal,  
inheritance law

Office address: Ippokratous 2  
GR-853 00 Kos

Tel # office: (22420) 21175

Fax: (22420) 9211-72

Mobile: 6945556670

e-mail: [satmksa@yahoo.gr](mailto:satmksa@yahoo.gr)

**HATZANTONIS, ALCIBIADES**

Thessaloniki University Law Degree,  
1993; University of Essex – Law School  
LLM.

Specializes in: criminal, civil,  
inheritance, private  
int'l law

Office address: El. Venizelou 22, GR-  
853 00 Kos

Tel # office: (22420) 21776

Fax: (22420) 49533

Mobile:  
6974325477

e-mail:

[koslaw01@gmail.com](mailto:koslaw01@gmail.com)

**NAFPAKTOS (Tel. Area Code 26340)**

**POULOS, MARKOS**

Thrace University Law Degree, 1997

Specializes in: civil, criminal, administrative,  
Inheritance law

Office address: Tzavella 96, GR-303 00  
Nafpaktos  
Tel. # office: (26340) 28492  
Mobile: 6945799878  
Fax: (26340) 23666  
e-mail: poulos\_m@yahoo.gr

**MASGALA, VASSILIKI**

Athens University Law Degree, 1996. Practicing Attorney since 1998.

Specializes in: civil, inheritance,  
administrative,  
labor, criminal law

Office address: Tzavella 65, GR-303 00  
Nafpaktos  
Tel/Fax # office: (26340) 29803  
Mobile: 6945655755  
e-mail: [vasmasgala@yahoo.gr](mailto:vasmasgala@yahoo.gr)

**GIZAS, VASSILIOS**

Athens University Law Degree, 1996.

Specializes in: civil, inheritance,  
administrative,  
Inheritance law

Office address: Kapordeli 17, GR-303 00  
Nafpaktos  
Tel # office: (26340) 25801  
Fax: (26340) 21801  
Mobile: 6945895556  
e-mail: [bgizas@gmail.com](mailto:bgizas@gmail.com)

**NAFPLION (Tel. Area Code 27520)**

**BEZAS, STAVROS**

Athens University Law

Degree, 1977; Munich Law School.

Specializes in: general practice

Office address: St. George 10 Sq. GR-211  
00 Nafplio  
Tel # office: (27520) 25595/27481  
Fax: (27520) 21226  
Mobile: 6936563444

**KARAPAVLOS, COSTAS**

Athens University Law

Degree, 1981.

Specializes in: civil, tax law

Office address: Sofroni 2, GR-211

00 Nafplion

Tel # office: (27520) 28578

Fax: (27520) 285-78  
Mobile: 6972019993  
e-mail:  
[dafni@arg.forthnet.gr](mailto:dafni@arg.forthnet.gr)

**PATRAS (Tel. Area Code 2610)**

**GOURGOULIATOS, ANDREAS**

University of Thessaloniki Law  
Degree, 1997.

Specializes in: penal, civil, family,  
inheritance,  
European, Maritime law

Office address: Votsi 42, GR-262 21  
Patra  
Tel. # office: (2610) 222008  
Fax: (2610) 222008  
Mobile:  
6972403777

E-mail:

[andreasgour@yahoo.gr](mailto:andreasgour@yahoo.gr)

**KANELLAKIS, CONSTANTINOS**

Int'l Studies Program, Oxford, UK,  
1998;

Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Oxford, UK,  
2001;

Master of Laws (LLM) Oxford, UK,  
2002;

Hellenic National Academic  
Recognition &

Information Center, 2005.

Specializes in: family, property,  
employment, banking, human rights,  
Int'l, criminal and EU law

Office address: Pantanassis 50, GR-  
262 21 Patra

Tel. & Fax: (2610) 220506

Mobile: 6945-992122

e-mail:

[con\\_kanellakis@yahoo.com](mailto:con_kanellakis@yahoo.com)

**RHODES (Tel. Area Code 22410)**

**KARALLA THEODOSIA**

Aristoteleio Uni. Of Thessaloniki. Practicing

Attorney since 1999. Takes cases in all islands  
of

Dodecanese. U.S. Citizen,



Specializes in: Real Estate, Family law,  
Marriage/Divorce, Auto/Accidents,  
Immigration, Labor Relations  
Office address: Amerikis St. 111 (1<sup>st</sup>  
floor), Rhodes 85100  
Tel. & Fax: (22410) 09080  
Mobile: 6946115282  
e-mail:  
[info@lawyerkaralla.com](mailto:info@lawyerkaralla.com)  
Website:  
[www.lawyerkaralla.com](http://www.lawyerkaralla.com)

**MAKRIDIS, MARINOS**

Athens University Law Degrees, 1981  
and 2003  
Specializes in: civil, banking, tax,  
criminal law  
Office address: Loch. Fanouraki 22  
GR-851 00 Rhodes  
Tel. # office: (22410) 28625  
Fax: (22410) 23994  
Mobile: 6945377960  
E-mail:  
[makridem@otenet.gr](mailto:makridem@otenet.gr)

**DIMITRIADIS, EFTHYMIOS**

Thessaloniki University Degree, 1988.  
Kings College of London.  
Specializes in: criminal, civil,  
inheritance law  
Office address: Amerikis 111  
GR-851 00 Rhodes  
Tel # office: (22410)  
34000/22410/34025  
Fax: (22410) 78084  
Mobile: 6946600400  
E-mail: [dimitlaw@otenet.gr](mailto:dimitlaw@otenet.gr)

**HIOTAKIS, VENETIA**

Athens University Law Degree, 1985.  
Specializes in: criminal, civil,  
inheritance, property,  
contract law  
Office address: Gr. Lambraki 7  
GR-851 00 Rhodes  
Tel # office: (22410) 27707

Fax: (22410) 27796

**SPARTI (Tel. Area Code 27310)**

**COKKONOS, ANASTASIOS**

Athens University Law  
Degree, 1964.  
Specializes in: General practice, inheritance  
& pension  
Office address: Lykourgou 156  
GR-231 00 Sparti  
Tel. # & fax: (27310) 26274  
Mobile: 6932233353

**VOLOS (Tel. Area Code 24210)**

**SINELIS, GEORGIOS**

Thessaloniki University Law  
Degree, 1978  
Specializes in: civil, inheritance, criminal,  
Administrative law  
Office address: K. Kartali 172, GR-382 21  
Volos  
Tel # office: (24210) 30582  
Fax: (24210) 26555  
e-mail: [xiradaki@otenet.gr](mailto:xiradaki@otenet.gr)

**THESSALONIKI**

**HADJIYANNAKIS, CONSTANTINOS**

University of Thessaloniki, (LL.D.),  
University of Rennes, France, (M.A.  
and PH.D.)  
Specializes in: Administrative, Antitrust  
and Competition, Civil Litigation,  
Criminal, Company and Corporate,  
Commercial Disputes Resolution,  
Estate & Labor, Intellectual Property,  
Investments, Taxation and Banking  
Office address: "NOMOS"  
THESSALONIKI LAW FIRM Vas.  
Heracliou 26, 546 24 Thessaloniki  
Tel.: 2310-263-665, 239-104  
Fax: 2310-222-405, 273-987  
Cell: 6977-213652  
E-Mail: [cgh@nomos.gr](mailto:cgh@nomos.gr)

**HARITIDOU, AFRODITI**

University of Thessaloniki, Law

School. Post-graduate studies  
DEA, Paris I-Sorbonne. Diploma in  
English, Commercial Law 1995,  
(College of Law in London, UK)

Office address: Komninon

8, 546 24 Thessaloniki

Tel. & Fax: 2310-227-

294, 813 420

E-mail: [achariti@otenet.gr](mailto:achariti@otenet.gr)

Specializes in: Commercial and  
Corporate, Civil, Marine Law,  
Taxation and Estate, Labor,  
Private International Law

### **KARAMITOPOULOS, MICHAEL**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School,  
graduated

1993. Post-graduate studies  
Thessaloniki Law School, at Dept of  
Commercial Law and Economics, 1999.  
Doctoral 11/1999.

Office address: Pavlou Mela 16,  
Thessaloniki

Tel. 2310-521614

Cell: 6937-186059

E-Mail: [mkaramito@hotmail.com](mailto:mkaramito@hotmail.com)

Specializes in: Civil, Company,  
European, Contract, Property law &  
Legal aid for cases of National Cadaster

### **KIKIS, ATHANASIOS**

Luton University (LLB), UK, First Class  
London School of Economics and  
Political Sciences (LSE), Master of  
Laws (LLM), UK, with Merit.

Office address: Frangon 19,  
54625 Thessaloniki Tel.:

2310-554154, 533256

Fax: 2310-554150

Cell: 6972-507304

E-Mail: [atkikis@hotmail.com](mailto:atkikis@hotmail.com)

Specializes in: Banking, Commercial  
and Corporate, Land, Family, Tort,  
Taxation, Trademarks, EC Law,  
Contracts, Criminal, Administrative  
Law Correspondence: Greek,  
English

### **KOSMATOPOULOU, CHIRSTINA**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School  
(1992-96). University of Edinburgh, UK,

Faculty of Law, LL.M. (Commercial and  
European Union Law).

Office address: Leoforos Nikis 3, 54624  
Thessaloniki

Tel.: 2310-257-728

Fax: 2310-260007

Cell: 6936-865888

E-mail: [ckosmat@otenet.gr](mailto:ckosmat@otenet.gr)

Correspondence: Greek, English,  
French, Italian, German

Specializes In: Stock market, contracts,  
legal due diligence, free an unfair  
competition, intellectual and industrial  
property law.

### **KYRIAKOU, MARIA-MIRELLA**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School ,  
Post- graduate studies in economic and  
commercial law. Lecturer for the  
Thessaloniki's Military School.

Office address: Olympiou Diamanti

16, 546 26 Office Tel: 2310-

525742, Cell: 6932-391281

Fax: 2310-526617 Home: 2310-  
471105

E-Mail: [kyriakou@otenet.gr](mailto:kyriakou@otenet.gr)

Undertakes all law cases.

Correspondence: Greek, English,  
French, Spanish, German, Bulgarian

### **MATSOS, GEORGIOS**

Law Degree from the University of  
Thessaloniki, 1995

LL.M. in European Law from the  
Free University of Brussels (French  
speaking), 1997

Ph.D. in Tax Law from the  
University of Bayreuth, Germany,  
2001

Office address: Vas. Irakleiou 47,  
Thessaloniki 54623

Tel: 2310-500 059 Fax: 2310-516726

Email: [matsos@mtk-  
law.com](mailto:matsos@mtk-law.com)

<http://www.mtl-law.com>

Correspondence: Greek, English,  
German, French, Italian, Dutch

Specializes in: Tax law. Corporate  
law, accounting law, labor law,  
administrative law, public



procurement, intellectual property, international private law, real estate, European law.

Assisted by two other lawyers.

### **NASSIS, LAMBRINI**

Juris Doctor degree from NY. Hunter College, City University of NY, NY, Bachelor of Arts (1999), Brooklyn Law School, Brooklyn NY, (2002). Admitted in NY State Barr and Thessaloniki Barr Assn. Member of the NY State Barr Assn, American Barr Assn, Brooklyn Barr Assn.

Office address: Frangon 3, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, Thessaloniki Tel.: 2310-551001

Fax: 2310-551002

Cell: 6973-757676

E-Mail: [lnassis@yahoo.com](mailto:lnassis@yahoo.com) ,

[lnassis@nysbar.com](mailto:lnassis@nysbar.com)

Correspondence: Greek, English

Specializes in: Undertakes all cases

### **NEDELKOPOULOS, ANTONIOS**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School, 1980. Special studies at International University Institute in Luxembourg in 1981. Post-graduate studies (Master of Law in International and Comparative Law) in the Free University of Brussels. Post-graduate studies in Public Law, University of Thessaloniki, 1983. Member of International Bar Association since 1990. Member of Lawyers Association of Northern Greece since 1989. between 1995-1998. As of November 1996 admitted to the Supreme Court.

Office address: Hermou 18A, 546 24 Thessaloniki

Tel.: 2310-285-049, 282-952, 341-127

Fax: 2310-266-559,

E-Mail: [antonios@nedelkopoulos.gr](mailto:antonios@nedelkopoulos.gr)

Website: [www.nedelkopoulos.gr](http://www.nedelkopoulos.gr)

Specializes in: Corporate Tax, Industrial Property (Trade Marks, Patents, etc.), Immovable Property, Commercial Disputes, Franchising  
Correspondence: Greek, English,

French

### **PALIOZIKAS, ATHANASIOS**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School. Public

Law and Civil Sciences.

Office address: 28<sup>th</sup> October 26, 54640 Thessaloniki

Tel.: 2310-543-619, 237-400

Cell: 6977-301011, 6944-301011

e-mail: [thanasios@paliozikas.gr](mailto:thanasios@paliozikas.gr)

Specializes in: Criminal, Taxation and Estate

Correspondence: Greek, English, French

### **PAPADOPOULOS, OTHON**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School.

Office address: Gyzi 6, 54640 Thessaloniki

Tel. 2310-512151 and fax (office),

2310-868181 (home)

Cell: 6944-508250

E-Mail:

[othonpapadopoulos@hotmail.com](mailto:othonpapadopoulos@hotmail.com)

Specializes in: Criminal, civil litigation, personal injury, accident, family law, business, property law.  
Correspondence, Greek, English, Italian

### **PAPADOPOULOS-TSAYANNIS, DIMITRIOS**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School. LL.M. Cornell Law School, NY in International Business

Transactions. LL.M. Universite

Libre de Bruxelles in European

Economic Law. Legal advisor of

SAE (Council of Hellenes Abroad).

Office address: Tsimiski 54, 546 23 Thessaloniki

Tel.: 268-683, 268-820, 220-653

Fax: 223-477, Mobile: 6944-375770

E-mail: [papadod@otenet.gr](mailto:papadod@otenet.gr)

Specializes in: International Business and Insurance Law, Tax & Estate, Family Law.

Correspondence: Greek, English, French

Partnership with three attorneys.

**TSANDILAS, ANDREAS**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School.  
Post graduate studies at the University  
of Thessaloniki, Public Law.

Office address: 26<sup>th</sup> October

10, 546 27 Thessaloniki

Tel.: 2310-512-293, 845-  
430

E-Mail: [andtsa@otenet.gr](mailto:andtsa@otenet.gr)

Specializes in: Commercial and  
Corporate, Administrative, Civil,  
Criminal, Patents, Commercial  
Disputes, Taxation & Estate, Labor Law  
Correspondence: Greek, English,  
French

**VLAHAKI, DIMITRA**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School,  
1998-04. Hellenic Institute of  
Graphology, Athens, degree in  
Document Analysis

Office address: Halkeon 11, 54631  
Thessaloniki

Tel.: 2310-267173 (office) 2310-  
305633 (home) Cell: 6945-860524

E-Mail: [dvlahaki@hol.gr](mailto:dvlahaki@hol.gr)

Specializes in: Civil, Real Estate,  
Family, Administrative Law. Forensic  
Document Examiner, registered with  
the District Court of Thessaloniki.  
Correspondence: Greek and English

**XIROMERITES, CONSTANTINOS**

University of Thessaloniki, Law  
School. One year AFS, Kansas,  
six months European Young  
Lawyers, London.

Office address: Agias Theodoras  
5, 546 23 Thessaloniki Tel.: 2310-  
280-440, 225-689, 342-890

Mobile: 694-545-680

E-Mail: [xiromeriteslaw@hotmail.com](mailto:xiromeriteslaw@hotmail.com)

Specializes in: Commercial and  
Corporate, Administrative, Civil,  
Criminal, Patents, Commercial  
Disputes, Taxation and Estate Law  
Correspondence: Greek, English

**ZACHARIADIS, DIOGENIS****Law Offices**

Pantios University of Political  
Sciences, Athens. University of  
Thessaloniki, Law School.

Office address: Venizelou 4,  
546 24 Thessaloniki

Tel.: 2310-227-110, 272-405, 528-638,  
234-306, 225-354

Fax: 2310-220-  
891, Cell: 6944-  
534590

E-Mail: [dzlaw@hol.gr](mailto:dzlaw@hol.gr)

Specializes in: Civil, Commercial,  
Industrial, Banking, Patents,  
Property, Family Law  
Correspondence: Greek, English,  
German, French .

**ALEXANDROUPOLIS****AGGLIAS, THEODOROS**

University of Thessaloniki, Law  
School. Post graduate studies  
in Public Law.

Office address: Irinis 39, 681 00  
Alexandroupolis

Tel.: (25510) 24-142, 25-308

Cell: 6945-792900

E-Mail:

[agglia@otenet.gr](mailto:agglia@otenet.gr)

Specializes in: criminal  
law. Correspondence:  
Greek, English

**EDESSA****VETTAS, IOANNIS**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School.  
Seminars in Hague Academy of  
International Law, Oxford, St. Andrews,  
Rading, UK.

Office address: Platia  
Timenidou 1, Office Tel.:  
(23810) 22-917, 22-278

Fax: (23810) 28-620

Specializes in: Civil,  
Criminal, Labor Law.  
Correspondence: Greek,  
English

## **KATERINI**

### **TAOULAS, KONSTANTINOS**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School.

Office address: Varnali 3, 601 00 Katerini

Tel.: (23510) 35-796, Mobile: 6944-971700

Fax: (23510) 29223

E-Mail: [contaoul@pathfinder.gr](mailto:contaoul@pathfinder.gr)

Civil (especially family and hereditary)m International Abduction, European and National Trade Mark, Commercial, Commercial Disputes Law.

Correspondence: Greek, English, German

## **KAVALA**

### **MEGAS, AHILLEAS LAW OFFICES**

University of Athens, Law School.

Office address: Platia Nikotsara 6, 65201 Kavala

Tel.: 2510-232239, FAX: 2510-232299

Cell: 6936-854747

E-Mail: [a-megas@otenet.gr](mailto:a-megas@otenet.gr)

Specializes in: Civil, Commercial, Criminal, Trade Law

Correspondence: Greek, English, Italian, German Born in Greece.

Cooperates with two attorneys, Stefanos Tsakmakis and George Tahtsidis.

## **NAOUSA**

### **TAOULAS, DEMOSTHENES**

University of Thessaloniki, Law School.

Office address: Themeli 6, 59 200 Naoussa

Tel.: (23320) 22-296, 51230, 21921

Cell: 6944-772686, 6945-371777

Fax: (23320) 52055,

E-Mail: [dtaoulas@oenet.gr](mailto:dtaoulas@oenet.gr)

Specializes in: Civil, Commercial and Corporate, Commercial Disputes, Taxation and Estate, Criminal Law.

Correspondence: Greek, English, German, Albanian.

## **RETAINING A FOREIGN ATTORNEY**

***DISCLAIMER: THE INFORMATION IN THIS CIRCULAR IS PROVIDED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY. THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE MAKES NO WARRANTY REGARDING THE ACCURACY OF THIS INFORMATION. WHILE SOME OF THE INFORMATION IS ABOUT LEGAL ISSUES, IT IS NOT LEGALADVICE. QUESTIONS INVOLVING INTERPRETATION OF SPECIFIC FOREIGN LAWS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO FOREIGN ATTORNEYS.***

**PROVISO:** Officers of the Department of State and U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad are prohibited by federal regulation from acting as agents, attorneys or in a fiduciary capacity on behalf of U.S. citizens in private legal disputes abroad. (22 CFR 92.81; 10.735-206(a)(7); 72.41; 71.5.)

## **RECOMMENDING A FOREIGN**

**ATTORNEY:** 22 CFR 92.82 provides that Foreign Service officers shall refrain from recommending a particular foreign attorney, but may furnish names of several attorneys, or refer inquiries to foreign

law directories, bar associations or other organizations.

## **FOREIGN ATTORNEYS**

## **REPRESENTING THE U.S.**

## **GOVERNMENT ABROAD:** U.S.

embassies and consulates abroad generally do not have foreign attorneys on a retainer to represent the interests of the U.S. Government. (See 22 U.S.C. 2698(a); 28 C.F.R. 0.45; Volume 2,

Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM), Department of State, Sec. 283; Volume 9, Foreign Affairs Manual, Sec. 971.2.)

**BACKGROUND:** This information flyer was devised primarily for the lay person confronted with a private legal problem abroad. It contains general practical suggestions for dealing with a foreign attorney. General information concerning foreign legal aid is also discussed. For American lawyers facing the task of retaining foreign legal counsel, see Lewis, *Selecting and Working With Foreign Counsel*, The International Lawyer's Deskbook, American Bar Association, 393-410 (1996) and Epstein & Snyder, *International Litigation: A Guide to Jurisdiction, Practice and Strategy*, 2nd, 2.10-2.13, p. 2-17 - 2-24 (1994).

**WHAT TYPE OF LAWYER WILL YOU NEED:** **Barristers and Solicitors:** In some foreign countries it may be necessary to retain the services of both a solicitor and a barrister. In such jurisdictions, barristers are allowed to appear in court, including trial courts and higher courts of appeal or other courts. Solicitors are allowed to advise clients and sometimes represent them in the lower courts. They may also prepare cases for barristers to try in the higher courts..**Notaries, "Notaires", "Notars", and "Huissiers":** In some countries, notaries public, "notaires", "notars" and "huissiers" can perform many of the functions performed by attorneys in the United States. A notary in a civil law country is not comparable to a notary public in the United States. Their education and training differs from that of most notaries public in the United States. They frequently draft instruments such wills and conveyances. In some countries a notary is a public official appointed by the Ministry of Justice, whose functions include not only preparing

documents, but the administration and settlement of estates. Such notaries serve as repositories for wills and are empowered to serve legal documents. In some countries "huissiers"

serve documents. They are not lawyers, but are very specialized members of the foreign legal profession. They may not plead cases in court. Your foreign attorney may delegate certain functions to a notary, "notaire", "notar" or "huissier".

**Foreign Legal Consultants:** These are U.S. law firms with offices in foreign countries. They may or may not be licensed to practice law abroad. **Selecting an Attorney:**

When you receive a list of attorneys, consider contacting several attorneys, briefly describing the nature of the services you desire. Find out the attorney's qualifications and experience. Find out how the attorney plans to represent you. Ask specific questions and expect the attorney to explain legal activities in language

that you can comprehend. Do not turn over documents or funds until you are satisfied that the attorney understands your problem and is willing to handle your case. Find out the rules of the foreign country concerning attorney-client confidentiality. **GUIDELINES ON**

#### **HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR FOREIGN ATTORNEY:**

**Understanding Your Attorney:** Ask your attorney

to analyze your case, giving you the positive and negative aspects and probable outcome. Do not expect your attorney to give a simple answer to a complex legal question. Be sure that you understand the technical language in any contract or other legal document prepared by your attorney **before** you sign it.

**Fees:** Find out what fees the attorney charges and how the attorney expects to be paid. In some countries fees are fixed by local law. Establish a billing schedule that meets your requirements and is acceptable to the foreign attorney. Foreign lawyers may be unaccustomed to including a description of work performed in connection with billing. Some foreign attorneys may expect to be paid in advance; some may demand payment after each action they take on your behalf and refuse to take further action until they are paid; and some may take the case on a contingency or percentage basis, collecting a pre-arranged percentage of moneys awarded to you by the foreign court.

Request an estimate of the total hours and costs of doing the work. Be clear who will be involved in the work and the fees charged by each participant. Determine costs if other attorneys or specialists need to be consulted, such as barristers. See "Payment of Attorneys and Litigation Expenses in Selected Foreign Nations", U.S. Library of Congress, Law Library, Doc. LL-95-2 (March 1995) (Includes information on Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Taiwan.)

**Method of Payment:** Find out the expected means of payment (corporate check, bank check, personal check, international money order, wire transfer), specify currency and exchange rates (when and where applicable or feasible).

**Progress Reports:** Ask that your attorney keep you informed of the progress of your case according to a pre-established schedule.

Remember that most foreign courts work rather slowly. You may, therefore, wish the attorney to send you monthly reports, even though no real developments have ensued, simply to satisfy your doubts about the progress of the case. Ask what the fee will be for progress reports.

**Language:** Is the attorney fluent in English? This may or may not be important to you. If the foreign attorney does not speak or write in English, you can arrange for translation of correspondence. Attorneys on lists prepared by the U.S. embassies and consulates abroad do speak English.

**Document Translations:** If you need to provide complex or technical documents to your attorney, you may wish to consider having the documents translated into the attorney's native language. Remember that even a fundamental knowledge of English may not be enough to enable the attorney to understand technical documents you provide. Discuss with your attorney whether it is preferable to translate the documents in the U.S. or in the foreign country. Compare the costs.

**Communication:** Remember your responsibility to keep your attorney informed of any new developments in your case. Be honest and frank with your attorney. Tell the attorney every relevant fact in order to get the best representation of your interests.

Establish how you be communicate with your foreign attorney (mail, phone, fax, Internet.) **Time:** Find out how much time the attorney anticipates the case may take to complete. (Note: in some countries the courts recess for a period of several months. In addition, even if the case is resolved, currency control laws may delay the transfer of funds awarded to you from the foreign country for an indefinite period of time. Discuss these issues with your attorney to ensure there is no confusion.

**Authentication and Translation of Documents:**

It may be helpful for you to provide foreign authorities or your attorney with authenticated, translated copies of pertinent documents. Consult your foreign attorney before going to this expense. An information flyer explaining the authentication process is available from the Office of American Citizens Services, either by mail or via our Internet Consular Affairs home page described below under "Additional Information". These topics include Hague Legalization Convention and General Authentication Flyer. See also the U.S. State Department's Authentications Office home page.

**Records:** Consider requesting copies of all letters and documents prepared on your behalf. Inquire about the costs of mailing you such documents. **Complaints Against Foreign Attorneys:** If the services of your foreign attorney prove unsatisfactory, in addition to notifying the U.S. Department of State and/or the consular section of the U.S. embassy or consulate abroad, you may address your complaints to the local foreign bar association. Information about foreign bar associations may be obtained from the U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Foreign embassies and consulates in the U.S. may also have information on this subject.

**Assistance of U.S. Embassies and Consulate:**

Should your communication with a foreign attorney prove unsatisfactory, a U.S. consular officer may, if appropriate, communicate with the attorney on your behalf. In addition, complaints against foreign attorneys whose names appear on the consular list of attorneys can result in the removal

of their names from the list.

**Coordination with Attorneys in the U.S.:** American attorneys may not be in a position to represent your interests abroad, particularly because generally they will not be permitted to participate in foreign court proceedings under the laws of the foreign country. American attorneys experienced in international law procedure may be helpful in explaining the complex legal issues involved in your case and some may have associates abroad to whom they can refer you.

**Finding A Foreign Attorney:**  
**U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management,**  
(CA/OCS/ACS), Room 4811A, 2201 C Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20520; tel: 202-647-5225 or 5226. Please send a stamped, self addressed envelope, 8 1/2 x 11, to accommodate postage for 20 sheets of paper or more. These lists of attorneys are also being added to the Internet home pages of our U.S. embassies and consulates. Lists of attorneys are prepared by U.S. embassies and consulates triennially. The lists include names, addresses, telephone numbers, etc., and information concerning the foreign attorney's educational background, areas of specialization, and language capability. When compiling the lists, U.S. consular officers send letters and questionnaires to the attorneys in their consular district in the foreign country. American attorneys licensed to practice in the foreign country or working as foreign legal consultants are also included. Local

foreign bar associations are used as a resource in determining whether an attorney is in good standing. See Volume 7, Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual 990 (8/30/94) and 22 CFR 92.82.

### **COMPLAINTS AGAINST GREEK ATTORNEYS**

If the services of your Greek attorney prove unsatisfactory, in addition to notifying the Department of State and the U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad, you may address your complaints to the local Greek bar association. Please contact the U.S. Embassy in Athens, for assistance, at 210-7202414.